

Instructions:

This worksheet is designed to help you identify what you are looking for in a thesis lab, keeping your whole self in mind. The answers you come up with will help guide you during your first year and throughout your PhD.

- 1) To identify potential rotation labs - you can share this information with other students, faculty, or staff so they understand what you are looking for and can offer suitable suggestions.
- 2) To choose a thesis lab - you can use this information to populate the "criteria" column in the Decision Matrix for Lab Rotations, and then assess your rotations for how well they meet your needs.
- 3) To achieve your goals in grad school - revisit this document yearly! Fill it out again and see if things have shifted for you. You can use the most current information to create an Individual Development Plan or have a conversation with your PI about your goals.

	Our Example	Your Answers	Sample Student 1	Sample Student 2	Sample Student 3	
1	What are your goals for your PhD? Why are you getting this PhD? What will this PhD signify or entail? What experiences do you want to have? Why did you choose UCSF? Why now?					
1.1	Scientific and Academic	to record from neurons to answer a new question		to learn - become an expert in the fields that actually interest me rather than what others influenced me was practical	To be able to understand how i can design bioengineered models physiologically relevant to what is needed for a drug or disease model understanding	use engineering to answer a basic biology question
1.2	Professional and Career	to become an expert in something		work life balance, do interesting science every day but have a chance to breathe and balance my life with recreation	To have some tools under my belt	to get a career in academia such as a professor
1.3	Personal and Community	to understand what it means to be a scientist and incorporate that with other ways of knowing		collaboration, not be afraid of asking questions and put myself out there, establish relationships with people outside of my field to learn and build community	To have a network of people that support me in my goals to be successful in my route down academia or industry	to find a professor who cares about my success and a supportive lab culture

	Our Example	Your Answers	Sample Student 1	Sample Student 2	Sample Student 3	
2	What do you need to achieve those goals? What's your ideal situation? What has worked best for you in the past?					
2.1	What does good work-life integration look like for you? (What are your ideal working hours and location? Structured or flexible? What activities or people support your wellness?)	I can define my own working hours and have at least one weekend day to myself		hybrid work, an environment focused on quality of work rather than quantity. if someone is efficient and finishes their work in 6 hours, then they go home rather than being pressured to do busy work for 2 hours to meet a quota.	I want to be able to do a 9-5 on weekdays and i hope to come in on weekends if necessary to be able to workout,meditate, go to church, and do hobbies that help me achieve a great work-life.	mostly 9 - 5 schedule and occasionally stay in lab late
2.2	What aspects of lab environment or culture help you feel connected or engaged? (How do people work? How do they work together? What are the lab's/lab-members' values?)	Quiet environment, people value each other and collaboration		group office space, grabbing coffee/lunch/drinks outside of work hours	I feel that when others are happy and at peace in the lab environment I also feel that. This gives me the opportunity to interact with and even find out some cool stuff about my mates. Then when it comes to science it isn't so cut and stone but it allows us to be creative!	lab members chat with each other in their free time and people can reach out to one another for help whenever it's needed
2.3	Think of someone in a mentoring or supervising role you've worked well with. What did they do? What did you do? (What did you get/learn from the PI? What were meetings like? How available were they?)	Having regular meetings where we can set goals and follow up week to week		hands-off, would read the room as to whether or not their instruction/supervision was needed, checked in as needed, clear expectations and no hovering	They respected me,helped me with my confidence in science,and were super understanding when i had any problems--personal or in science	regular one-on-one meetings with the mentor. Mentor is very responsive to Slack and encourage students to give feedback. Open communication and gives good advice both scientifically and professionally.
2.4	How do you like to develop your scientific thinking/projects? (Left alone until you have something? Working closely with PI or lab members?)	Thinking on my own but I develop ideas better with other people		working with PI/mentors, open discussions about ideas	I like to work closely with mentors so that I could tell people issues im facing in my experiment and get feedback	working closely with postdoc mentor and with PI together
2.5	What projects or fields or questions do you want to work on? (This can be specific or general, both are valid)	plasticity in the adult nervous system, doesn't matter where		data analysis, move from clinical science to more basic science	I want to work in a field that helps improve the outcome of a disease so this could mean drug development	I'm not sure

		Our Example	Your Answers	Sample Student 1	Sample Student 2	Sample Student 3
2.6	What technical skills do you want to develop? (Equipment, methods, analyses)	recording from live neurons! Doesn't matter how		statistical software systems/coding, cell and force measurements	I want to develop the skill to think critically and logically as to why I am doing what I am doing on a scientific level	computational skills
2.7	What professional skills do you want to develop? (Examples: Communication, management, leadership, teamwork, vision)	Clearly communicate science in presentations, learn to develop a multi-year vision		communication, public speaking, leadership	I want to learn how to communicate science, defend my work, and present it	presentations, mentoring/teaching, writing grants/papers
2.8	What experiences do you need to achieve your career goals? (If you don't have a career goal, then what do you need in order to make your best next step?)	Figure out what's important to me in a job, what I like and don't like about doing science, if I want to be faculty		investigate career/job options that interest me and figure out what some skills are to help guide my science	I need to have an internship at a company	more experience doing research